THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) While granting licences to six private operators with effective date in 1997-98, a condition was imposed that private operators would provide Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in 97,806 villages in first 3 years from the effective date. It was also stipulated that the action will be taken against those operators who failed to fulfil their roll out obiligation.

(c) and (d) Private Operators have provided 11632 VPTs as on 30th June, 2003. These including 830 VPTs provided in Punjab as replacement of MARR VPTs. The Government has been persuading the private Basic Service Operators of fulfil their committed roll out obligations. Liquidated Damage Charges to the tune of Rs. 53.75 crores have been recovered from six Private Basic Telephone Service Operators for the delay in commencement of service as well as for the delay in provisioning of VPTs and Director Exchange Lines.

Bangalore, A Global Telecom City

1202. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bangalore is all set to become first Global Telecom City by the year 2008; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Rural WLL services in Andhra Pradesh

1203. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the coverage of rural WLL services is very less;